

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 SSM-03 HA-05 /080 W
-----076001 011349Z /43

P 011212Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7463
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 09816

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OVIP EG US
SUBJECT: SADAT REMARKS TO TIME "NEWSTOUR" GROUP

SUMMARY: SADAT TELLS TIME "NEWSTOUR" GROUP PEACE PROCESS
NOT DEAD BUT NEEDS ADDED MOMENTUM. BEGIN RESPONSE TO HIS
INITIATIVE HAS BEEN "INSULTING". PRESIDENT HOPES FOR
SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS ON PEACE FRONT BEFORE OCTOBER 1978
UNEF RENEWAL DEADLINE. END SUMMARY.

1. CAIRO-BASED AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN WILLIAM HARRISON,
WHO HELPED MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR TIME MAGAZINE "NEWSTOUR"
VISIT TO EGYPT, HAS GIVEN US READING ON HIGHLIGHTS OF
GROUP'S MARCH 31 MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SADAT, WHICH HE
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ATTENDED. FROM FIRST, HARRISON SAID, GROUP HAD LOOKED
FORWARD TO MEETING EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT AND SADAT MADE
EXTREMELY FAVORABLE IMPRESSION. NEWSTOUR PARTICIPANTS
WERE ESPECIALLY PLEASED WHEN, AFTER INITIAL REMARKS,
MEMBERS OF PRESS PRESENT WERE ASKED TO LEAVE SO THAT
PRESIDENT COULD HAVE FRANK QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSION
WITH TIME GROUP.

2. HARRISON SAID HE FELT THAT OVERALL SADAT VIEW OF MIDDLE EAST SITUATION, AS CONVEYED TO TIME GROUP, WAS RELATIVELY UPBEAT. FOR EXAMPLE, PRESIDENT VIGOROUSLY DENIED, IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, THAT PEACE INITIATIVE BEGUN IN NOVEMBER WAS "DEAD". HE EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT PEACE PROCESS CLEARLY NEEDS MORE "MOMENTUM" IF IT IS TO SUCCEED.

3. BEGIN REACTION. ACCORDING HARRISON, SADAT REPEATEDLY CHARACTERIZED BEGIN RESPONSE TO HIS INITIATIVE AS "AN INSULT." HE SAID THAT IF GOE WERE NOT PREPARED OFFER ACCEPTABLE TERMS, BEGIN SHOULD HAVE TOLD HIM (SADAT) SO FRANKLY. IDEA OF RETAINING SETTLEMENTS IN SINAI PROTECTED BY ISRAELI TROOPS WAS PARTICULARLY "INSULTING". SADAT SAID HE HAD MADE IT CLEAR TO ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER WEIZMAN DURING TALKS THIS WEEK THAT ISRAELI POSITIONS ON KEY MIDDLE EAST ISSUES WERE SIMPLY "UNACCEPTABLE".

4. ISRAELI LEADERSHIP. ASKED IF HE THOUGHT BEGIN GOVERNMENT, IN VIEW OF ITS UNCOMPROMISING POSITION ON MIDDLE EAST QUESTIONS, SHOULD BE REPLACED, SADAT EMPHASIZED THAT THIS WAS ENTIRELY AN INTERNAL ISRAELI MATTER ON WHICH HE COULD NOT APPROPRIATELY COMMENT. HIS OWN VISIT TO JERUSALEM IN NOVEMBER WAS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF ISRAELI SOVEREIGNTY. CHOICE OF NATIONAL LEADER WAS CLEARLY UP TO ISRAELIS. HARRISON SAID THAT IN COURSE OF DISCUSSION, HOWEVER, SADAT WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO PRAISE WEIZMAN FOR HIS "FLEXIBILITY" AND AT ONE POINT CHARACTERIZED OPPOSITION LEADER PERES IN SIMILARLY POSITIVE TERMS.

5. ISRAELI POSITION ON WEST BANK. ONE NEWSTOUR PARTICIPANT, HARRISON RECALLED, READ AN EXTRACT FROM WHAT WAS DESCRIBED AS AN OFFICIAL ISRAELI STATEMENT OF POLICY, WHICH ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE WERE "OTHER CLAIMS" TO POLITICAL CONTROL OF WEST BANK. PARTICIPANT ASKED IF SUCH ACKNOWLEDGEMENT DID NOT REPRESENT A CONCESSION ON PART OF ISRAELIS. SADAT REPLIED FLATLY "NO". HE DID NOT SEE THAT IN FACE OF ISRAELI ACTIONS, SUCH STATEMENT REPRESENTED ANY CONCESSION AT ALL.

6. TIMETABLE. ASKED WHAT SORT OF TIMETABLE HE FORESAW FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN PEACE PROCESS, SADAT EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THERE WOULD BE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS WELL BEFORE OCTOBER 1979, WHEN UN AGREEMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE RENEWED. EMBASSY COMMENT: SADAT ALMOST

CERTAINLY MEANT OCTOBER 1978 (NOT 1979) WHEN UNEF MANDATE COMES UP FOR RENEWAL. HARRISON SAID HE THOUGHT MOST PARTICIPANTS TOOK PRESIDENT AT HIS WORD, HOWEVER, AND FELT HE WAS LOOKING 18 MONTHS AHEAD.

7. OTHER REMARKS. RECALLING HIS LAST VISIT TO U.S., SADAT REPEATED TO TIME GROUP HIS COMMENT THAT AFTER HAVING LEFT EGYPT WITH FEELING OF DISCOURAGEMENT, HE HAD BEEN GREATLY BUOYED BY DISCUSSIONS WITH PRESIDENT CARTER. ON PALESTINIANS, SADAT SAID HE HAD "DONE ALL THAT HE COULD" FOR THEM. SO-CALLED "STEADFASTNESS FRONT," HE NOTED, WAS RENT BY CONTINUAL BICKERING AND INTERNAL CONFLICT. IDEA FLOATED SOME TIME AGO OF HAVING PALESTINIANS REPRESENTATIVE

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